



Introduction

Worldwide, over 11 million people are incarcerated (imprisoned), causing many issues both socially and economically, continually increasing. 102 countries have reported prison populations of over 110%. This leads to the abuse of human rights and factors into many countries' economic problems. Additionally, COVID-19 and many other factors are a large issue for people who are incarcerated. Not all prisoners are males though. According to penalreform.org¹ over 700,000 women worldwide are living in prison and 19,000 are living with children. On top of that over

410,000 children are in detention facilities, on top of 1 million children in police custody. This is not to mention how much money is spent on life sentences and the death penalty. Half a million people in the world face the death penalty and over 20,000 people are currently on death row. Another issue is that many of these crimes

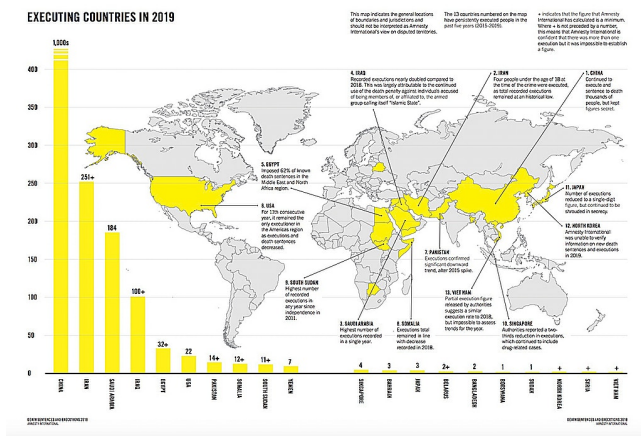


Figure 1: Statistics shown for death row worldwide.

worldwide are non violent-offenses. These include drug charges which comprise 20% and 20% of those

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are possession related. Only 7% percent of people are imprisoned for homicide, which is quite less than expected.

The prison systems of many countries are underfunded or funds are located in spots which don't benefit the prisoners. Most funds go to staff, security and infrastructure. Continuing off the point of overpopulation this has led to violence, death, lack of healthcare and decreases opportunity for rehabilitation. According to penalreform.org² 25 in 100,000 prisoners commit suicide. This is a combination of human rights violations and lack of hope. Overpopulation of prisons is a horrifying factor of many suicides. Prisoners constantly hang themselves as well as a result. Prisoners often are abused. Most prisons have high rates of sexual and domestic violence. In countries such as Egypt and Syria alone people are tortured in prisons as young as children. According to hrw.org³ young boys are getting beaten and abused in Egypt's prisons. Low spending on prisoner's needs is also a huge issue.

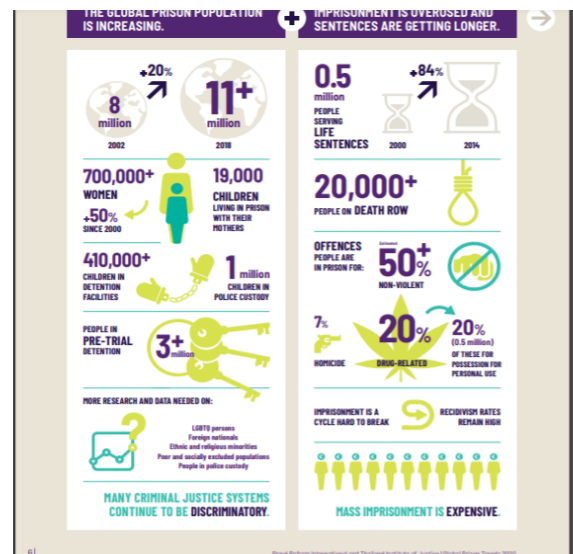


Figure 2: Statistics for incarceration worldwide.

According to prisonpolicy.org⁴ The average amount spent on food in prisons is about \$2.50 to an average american's \$8.12 just showing the bad quality the prisoners get. This sometimes even includes food poisoning and other issues with the food. This is not only a case in the US but also a case worldwide. Many third world countries spend even less than that on prison food. With low food quality comes sickness and other ill effects.

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<https://cdn.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Global-Prison-Trends-2020-Penal-Reform-International-Second-Edition.pdf>

³ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/23/witness-beaten-shocked-tortured-life-boys-egypts-prisons#>

⁴ <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/foodcosts.html>

One constant problem is that minorities and people of different beliefs and sexual orientation are often imprisoned in many countries, factoring towards the overpopulation and abuse in prisons globally. In the United States, two of every three people in prison are people of color. This is often linked to the stereotypes of different races. Another stat is 1 in 3 adults are people of color. This is a huge factor as the population in prisons are often above capacity. Discriminatory laws exist in many countries that factor into this. This is also due to the fact that minority communities are often more impoverished as they get less attention. Sometimes people are wrongfully imprisoned just because they look different than others. 3.8% of adults identify as part of the LGBTQ community. That is about 4 in 100. Out of the incarcerated about 7.9% is part of the community. This is partly because of anti-LGBTQ laws worldwide. According to [lgbtmap.org](https://www.lgbtmap.org)⁵ children are pushed to do crimes because of discriminatory laws and abuses. Also one thing is HIV and LGBTQ laws and drug laws, as often people look to drugs to help them. Black Students are 3x more likely than white students to get expelled. The discrimination and lack of support is a major factor towards offences and repeat offences. The prison system can be reformed to not be as discriminatory and this may help people and populations. Some countries such as the countries in the EU don't have as many problems like this.

One main problem of the criminal justice system is the amount of repeat offenders of laws. This can be due to the prison systems goal to punish instead of rehabilitate. According to [kriminalvarlden.se](https://www.kriminalvarlden.se)⁶ The prison rehabilitation system in Sweden shows clear change to the prisoners. It can help prisoners be more effective as well, helping out other people while at the same time, becoming better people. According to [cfc.wa.gov](https://www.cfc.wa.gov), the rate of recidivism in America which the goal of prisons is to punish is almost 50%, whereas Sweden has a lesser percentage. In other

⁵ <https://www.lgbtmap.org/file/lgbt-criminal-justice-poc.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.kriminalvarlden.se/>

regions such as the Nordic countries, there are less people in prison due to the rehabilitation and prevention before the person even commits the crime. Giving opportunities to people can solve the prison overpopulation problem. Due to the amount of people who go back to prison the conditions seem to get worse for them as the prisons are already overcrowded. Prison reform can have many ways to help out the prisoner, and working in prisons can also help benefit the prisoner. Countries also have several issues when it comes to maintaining prisons as they are filthy and horribly conditioned. Maintaining the prisons to keep prisoners safe is also a big deal. Another thing to look out for is how careless prison guards can be as prisoners will likely hurt other prisoners and guards don't seem to care all that much.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is a way to prevent crime before it happens?
2. What can your country do to limit populations of prisons?
3. How can your country impose laws to better the lives of prisoners?
4. How can your country limit prisoner abuse?
5. How can your country limit prisoners committing crimes again after leaving prisons?
6. What are ways your country is successful in helping prison reform?
7. How can that be used in other countries?

Helpful Links

- <https://www.penalreform.org/resource/global-prison-trends-2020/>
- <https://www.lgbtmap.org/file/lgbt-criminal-justice-poc.pdf>
- https://www.cfc.wa.gov/PublicationSentencing/Recidivism/Adult_Recidivism_FY2007.pdf
- [What Prison Cells Look Like Around The World](#)
- [Prison: Evidence of its use and over-use from around the world](#)
- [World Prison Population List|Eleventh Edition](#)
- [Prison Reform and Alternatives to Imprisonment](#)
- [World Prison Brief | an online database comprising information on prisons and the use of imprisonment around the world](#)